
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 December 2019

by Matthew Woodward BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/W/19/3236877
7 Cambridge Road, Balsham CB21 4HD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Derek Whitehead against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref S/1808/19/FL, dated 20 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as '3 bedroom detached dwelling on land within the curtilage of 7 Cambridge Road, Balsham'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies amidst a row of semi-detached properties which have an understated design comprising simple architectural detailing, pitched roofs, prominent chimney pots, and a consistent fenestration pattern. Despite many nearby properties having been altered and extended over time, including a wraparound front and side extension associated with the adjacent property, the subservient nature of any extensions visible in the street means that there remains a notable gap in between each pair of semi's, and the original form of each dwelling is readily appreciable.
4. The proposed dwelling would occupy an area currently used as general amenity space associated with 7 Cambridge Road (No 7). It would be two storeys in height with a hipped roof form. I note that some elements of the proposal would reflect the general design, height and depth of neighbouring properties. However, the width of the dwelling would be notably narrower than the total width of the frontage associated with the other pairs of semi's on the street. When combined with the varied fenestration pattern and hipped roof proposed, the built form would appear out of kilter with the overall appearance of the existing dwellings. Moreover, the proximity of the dwelling to the boundaries of No 6 and No 7 would give it a squeezed appearance, significantly reducing the gap between the two properties, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area.

5. The appellant has made me aware of an outline planning permission for a new dwelling adjacent to No 10¹. Taking the indicative plan I have been provided with relating to this permission on face value, I could see on my site visit that this dwelling would be located beyond the end of the row of existing semi's, with access taken off a different street, thus it would be significantly set back from Cambridge Road. The appellant has also provided me with a layout plan relating to a planning permission for a larger residential development which was being constructed on land generally behind the appeal property². However, the layout plan for this development shows that the dwellings would be set back considerably from the properties on Cambridge Road.
6. Therefore, I am unconvinced that either of the developments I have been referred to would significantly affect the rhythm and uniformity of the row of dwellings on either side of the appeal site. Conversely, the proposed dwelling would be positioned in between existing properties and, due to the size of the plot, the overall scale and design of the dwelling proposed, and the character of nearby properties, it would have a cramped and incongruous appearance in the street scene.
7. Consequently, for the foregoing reasons, I conclude that the development would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would be in conflict with Policies HQ/1 and S/7 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 which requires, amongst other matters, that development is compatible with its location, preserves or enhances the locality and is appropriate in terms of scale, mass, form, siting, design and proportions. The development would also be in conflict with paragraphs 127 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework which collectively require that development is sympathetic to local character and takes the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.

Other Matters

8. I have taken into account representations received relating to the potential for the development to adversely affect the living conditions of nearby occupants and highway safety. I note that these concerns were not included as reasons for refusal by the Council and, as I am dismissing the appeal for the reasons above, I have not pursued these matters further.
9. I understand that the proposal would make a small contribution to local housing numbers and the Council's future housing supply requirements. However, in connection with one dwelling, the contribution the proposal would make would be limited and does not outweigh the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons set out above the appeal is dismissed.

Matthew Woodward

INSPECTOR

¹ South Cambridgeshire District Council planning reference - S/1818/17/OL

² South Cambridgeshire District Council planning references - S/0255/17/OL
& S/2729/18/RM